



SAFE HAVEN:

A TOOLKIT FOR MENTAL HEALTH, SURVIVOR JUSTICE, AND ALTERNATIVES TO POLICING.



MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LIVES X ME TOO. INTERNATIONAL



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Resolution



#1000

BY JUNE JORDAN

I will love who loves me

I will love as much as I am loved

I will hate who hates me

I will feel nothing for everyone oblivious to me

I will stay indifferent to indifference

I will live hostile to hostility

I will make myself a passionate and eager lover in

response to passionate and eager love

I will be nobody's fool

SECTION ONE: POEM

SECTION TWO: INTRO



The Abolishing Patriarchal Violence (APV) Table of *Movement for Black Lives* (M4BL) was created **to end the epidemic and legacy of patriarchal violence within Black communities.**

Radical Black feminist politics and a commitment to abolitionist practices guide us. As a survivor-centered project-focused on advancing interventions, education, leadership development, power-building, and culture-shifting, we work to prevent, disrupt, interrupt, and interrogate the unchecked consequences of patriarchy and misogynoir in our families, relationships, communities, and movements.

As M4BL builds toward a care-centered approach to public safety and *me too.* *International.* continues its work to draw connections between sexual violence and mental health, the APV Table and me too. teamed up to create this toolkit as a gift to Black movement. We acknowledge the deep impact that patriarchal violence has on

one's mental health, and the **lack of community resources that center survivor justice.** We hope that this toolkit not only deepens understanding of the relationship between patriarchal violence and mental health, but also **offers public safety and Black feminist safety interventions that will pursue support and healing for survivors.**

Before reading, take a moment to ground yourself. **Take a deep breath! Inhale the feeling of safety and mental clarity.** Exhale all that gets in the way of your care and safety. Notice how you feel before you engage with this toolkit. Acknowledge what comes up. If you need to, please come back to grounding yourself as you engage with this toolkit. Ground yourself in the affirmation that we will continue to fight until all Black people can thrive, free from patriarchal violence.





All definitions come from **me too. International's Social and Political Framework** and **the Movement For Black Lives APV Table.**

SECTION THREE: GLOSSARY & WORD SEARCH

Ally:

A supporter of a community. In theory, this includes private acts of support, reading about the issue of that community, and/or extending empathy to said community.

Misogynoir:

Pronounced mi-soj-uhn-nwar, this term was created by Moya Bailey in 2008 to describe the anti-Black racist misogyny that Black women experience, particularly in U.S. visual and digital culture.

Bodily autonomy:

One's ability to govern their own body and exercise agency over every choice related to their body.

Harassment:

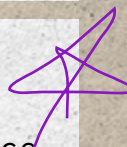
Any form of repeated unwelcomed actions toward a person that causes mental and/or emotional distress.

Cisheteropatriarchy:

A social, political, and economic system in which cisgender and heterosexual people (especially cisgender, heterosexual men) have power to dictate, exploit, exclude, and otherwise benefit from the organized oppression of transgender, gender-nonconforming, asexual, and queer people (especially people with the capacity to gestate).

Harm Reduction:

Tactics and strategies to reduce the impact of socially harmful behaviors. This term originated in relation to reducing the harmful effects of drug use.



Post-Traumatic Growth:

“The positive psychological change that is experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances” (Calhoun and Tedeschi, 1996).

Patriarchal Violence:

A massive, sticky web of abusive behaviors, policies, narratives, practices, and beliefs that traps our freedom and ability to live in safety. It is demonstrated through police violence, intimate partner violence, institutional violence, gendered poverty, and state-sanctioned violence. Patriarchal violence attacks Black women, children, queer people, and gender-expansive people in our bodies, our homes, and at work.

Safety Pods:

A tool to address and prevent harm, violence, emergency or crisis. Pods can also be used to address specific needs and aid in general support. Pods are made up of the people in our lives we can turn to first and rely on. These are the people in our lives who have consented to being there for us, either for general or specific purposes. They are an incredibly effective community condition that, when practiced en masse, could help to significantly reduce rates of harm, isolation, punishment, fear, and violence, while concretely putting into practice many of the values we hold most dear: connection, courage, trust, care, compassion, healing, accountability, love, and belonging.

Sexual Harm:

Any type of non-consensual sexual activity; it can include sexual harassment, physical touch, rape, and online acts.

Transformative Justice:

A political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm, and abuse. At its most basic, it seeks to respond to violence without creating more violence, and/or engaging in harm reduction to lessen the violence. TJ can be thought of as a way of “making things right,” getting in “right relation,” or creating justice together. TJ responses and interventions:

1. do not rely on the state (e.g., police, prisons, the criminal legal system, ICE, foster-care system (though some TJ responses do rely on or incorporate social services like counseling);
2. do not reinforce or perpetuate violence, such as oppressive norms or vigilantism; and most importantly,
3. actively cultivate the things we know prevent violence, such as healing, accountability, resilience, and safety for all involved. (Source: www.TransformHarm.org)

Survivor Justice:

An expansion of the work of the anti-rape movement that uses a wider lens to look at the issue of sexual violence beyond just a criminal issue that affects individuals; rather, it's seen as a social-justice issue that impacts society at large. SJ takes into account all the ways survivors of sexual violence are affected because of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, immigration status, or economic standing.

Systemic Oppression:

The intentional disadvantaging of groups of people based on their identity (e.g., gender, race, class, sexual orientation, language, etc.) while giving advantage to members of the dominant group.

Now that you know the terms, let's have some fun with them! **Look for all the new terms in the word search below:**

L A K S I N F U X I B H T B Z K S D S F I P M D Y
 U W X C Y V B F L V B I G R P A S W U N X H Q Y X
 Z P T I I S M I R Y C C B T R M O W M E J Y F A J
 B Y P E T S T I D W V L E N Y L L D J A M T I L J
 R C T G P A H E S Y H I Q H A R A S S M E N T L Y
 E S U R K A I E M O I A K K Y R K T V Y D P I Y L
 P I X K A F T Y T I G Y R K W X N O J L P L N S B
 B O C K E N B R P C Y R M S J H H H Z P C I U W
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 D N V T U P T F G A G O P O W E D J Q X J I R V Z
 I Q A I T J T A O W R C P P I B D Y O K E O Y I G
 L S F I Q R A S G R D C K A R R Z U V V S Z S V R
 Y Q Y C L R A V S N M A H K T E Q F C J C G S O G
 A E S N S W F U G V T A S A A O R S Z Q T B M O R B
 U A E U O U E U M X C J T F L T I S J H I Y E J O
 T X X A A D T H J A E K V I K V S A I A F O J U B
 O V U Z Z X Y Z A O T I T B V X I N R O J B N S O
 N R A D O J P G E D L I H T T E F O U C N C W T C
 O I L G B B O S Z K T C C C X X J R L D H F X I V
 M V H Q Z O D U C M W T H G N H B U D E B Y O C R
 Y O A M C T S P I T Q U R F R Q E R S R N N C E P
 U W R S M N K J K C U E E C D O Z O D T P C R Z Z
 C R M A J R H Q Z P O H F X F L W I O Y I R E Y H
 D X E V F A Y G Y U C K Z N Q C I T J O P C S Q M
 L W A R Z G H Y R B K P D N K G B N H N U X E S M

TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE
 POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH
 SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION
 BODILY AUTONOMY
 SURVIVOR JUSTIC
 HARM REDUCTION
 SAFETY PODS

CISHETEROPATRIARCHY
 PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE
 HARASSMENT
 MISOGYNOIR
 SEXUAL HARM
 ALLY



SECTION FOUR: SAFETY PODS

What are safety pods?

The idea of safety pods comes from the *Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective*.

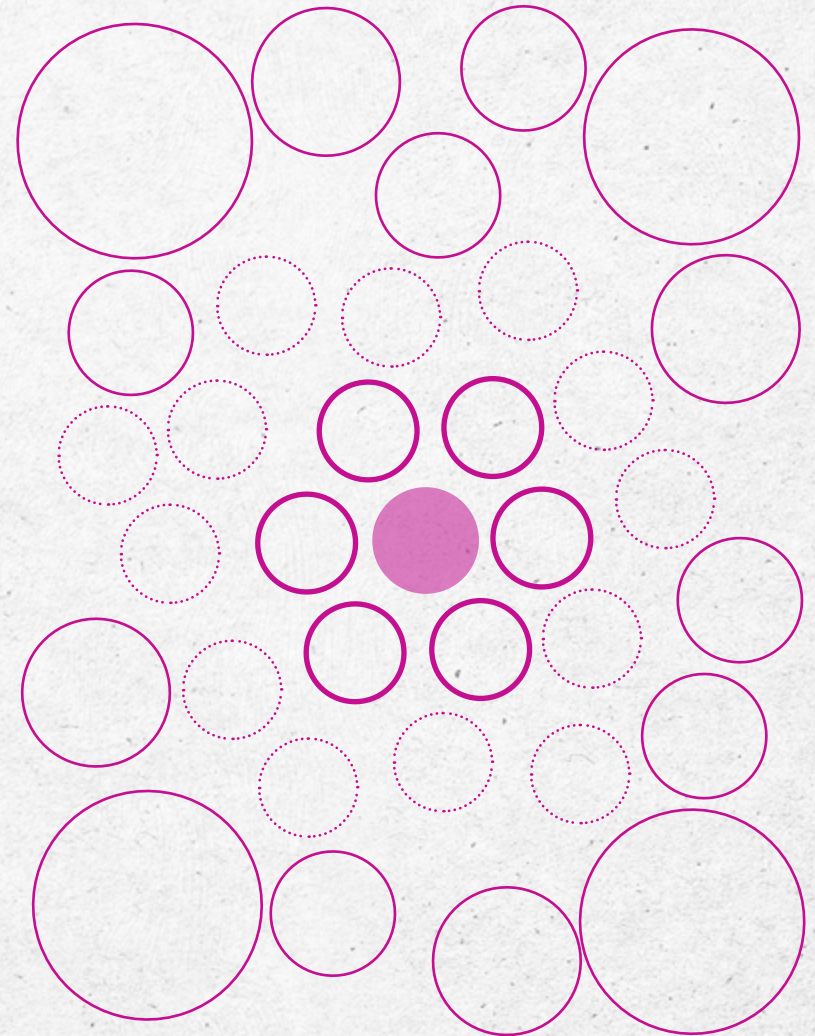
A safety pod is a tool to address and prevent harm, violence, emergency, or crisis. Pods can also be used to address specific needs and aid in general support. Pods are made up of the people in our lives we can turn to first and rely on. These are the people in our lives who have consented to be there for us, either for general or specific purposes. Your pod may include your friends, partners, neighbors, or co-workers. In general, pod people are often those you have some kind of relationship and trust with, even if it is not the deepest relationship and trust. They are an incredibly effective community condition that, when practiced en masse, could help to **significantly reduce rates of harm, isolation, punishment, fear, and violence**, while concretely putting into practice many of the values we hold most dear: **connection, courage, trust, care, compassion, healing, accountability, love, and belonging.**

Now that you know what a safety pod is, take the time to create your own safety-pod map. Put this resource into practice to actualize your own safety network.

Instructions

1. Write your name in the middle pink circle.
2. The surrounding bold-outlined circles are your pod. Write the names of the people who are in your pod. We encourage you to write the names of actual individuals instead of general entities such as “my organization” or “my neighbors.”
3. The dotted lines surrounding your pod are people who are “movable.” They are people who could be moved into your pod but need a little more work. For example, you might need to build more relationships or trust with them. Or maybe you’ve never had a conversation with them about mental health or sexual violence.
4. The larger circles at the edge of the page are for networks, communities, or groups that could be resources for you. It could be your local intimate partner violence direct-service organization, your cohort in nursing school, your youth group, or a transformative-justice group.

Your pod(s) may shift over time as your needs or relationships shift, or as people’s geographic locations shift. We encourage you to have conversations with your people about pods and transformative justice, actively grow the number of people in your pod, and build supportive relationships with each other.



Growing one’s pod is not easy and may take time. In pod work, we measure our successes by the quality of our relationships, and we invest the time it takes to build trust, respect, vulnerability, accountability, care, and love. We see building our pods as a concrete way to prepare and build resources for transformative justice in our communities.



APV's Black Feminist Safety Pods

One of the APV Table's strategic priorities is to create community-care models. In 2022, the APV Table voted on creating the Black Feminist Safety Pods (BFSP) as our table-wide project for 2023–2024 to help achieve our strategic priorities.

The epidemic and legacy of patriarchal violence has created unsafe conditions for Black women, girls, and queer and gender-expansive folks, in our bodies, workplaces, and homes. There is a lack of resources that are rooted in Black feminist politics and abolitionist practices to deal with this violence in our homes and communities. Setting up Black Feminist Safety Pods (BFSP) will create webs of support for people experiencing violence and harm, while also creating support networks for accountability and transformation for someone who has caused harm and violence. The APV Table's BFSP project was developed on the theory that we can help keep each other safe if we

embrace our communal responsibility.


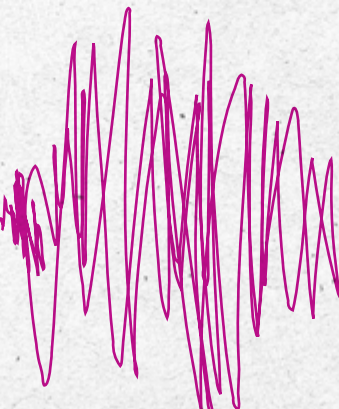
As a table, we set out for BFSP to be committed to reducing patriarchal violence in three pod locales that act as models for Black feminist self-determination and community care. These locales are **Birmingham, AL; Kansas City, MO; and Troy, NY.** In Birmingham, Grammy's Place is a model of Black feminist safety, housing Black trans youth and building community safety. In Kansas City, The Reale Justice Network is creating The Healing & Empowerment Center, a space for domestic-violence survivors run and led by domestic-violence survivors, to support survivors' process in leaving abusive situations and environments and providing them a community to re-root their lives in safety and healing. Led by Troy For Black Lives, the **Ubuntu House is a community center that provides safe housing for Black folks to build relationships and heal.**



heal



We want pod models to offer increased support to survivors in their communities while confronting harm-doers by utilizing transformative justice and accountability practices. These hyper-local pods are receiving training from the table on safety and security, addressing patriarchal violence, abolition, anti-capitalism, and Black queer feminism. **We hope the pods will develop more Black feminists committed to abolishing patriarchal violence, and that Black feminist safety pods act as a possible model for our movement for Black feminist safety.**



SECTION FIVE: PEOPLE'S RESPONSE CAMPAIGN


So many of us have a deeply personal connection to the work of survivor justice and liberation. We've experienced harm or witnessed harm inflicted on others, and we've seen firsthand how the systems we're told to turn to for protection, support, or justice often end up

compounding that harm instead. If you're reading this, you may know that pain well. *M4BL has a vision* for a future in which **Black people and all people can experience lasting freedom from these harms and receive access to holistic, survivor-centered resources to help us heal.** This vision is not just a dream—it's our plan to make it reality in the name of all survivors. And we're putting that plan into action! So, let's talk about it.

Sexual violence is an epidemic that **Black and brown women, as well as transgender, gender-**



nonconforming, intersex, and queer folks (TGNCIQ) people are particularly vulnerable to. More than 1 in 3 Black women experience contact sexual violence (which can include touching, kissing, oral sex, brushing up against a person without their consent, etc.) within their lifetime.



The harm of sexual violence extends far beyond the act of violence, and for many survivors, it has a lasting impact on emotional and mental health. About 70% of sexual-violence survivors experience mental distress in the weeks, months, and years afterward. More than a third of survivors contemplate suicide. Survivors are much more likely to struggle with work, personal relationships, drug use, and so much more. One of the ways Black

women, girls, and TGNCIQ people routinely experience police violence is by being targeted by police for sexual harassment, extortion, and assault. For many, this lasting trauma stems not only from the violence but from the systems that continue to inflict harm in the aftermath. Those systems include the police, who may disrespect, assault, and question a survivor's experience, or simply lack the skills to help them. It's the first responders who aren't trained in survivor justice, mental-health support, or trauma-informed care. The legal system is built to retraumatize, demoralize, and perpetuate harm, all for a tiny chance at what sounds like justice. Still, it offers no real opportunity for healing or transformation for anyone.

For generations, our communities have been victims of a cycle of violence in which our safety and mental health are often the casualties. The good news is, it doesn't have to be this way. The member organizations within the M4BL ecosystem, including our friends at me too. International, have developed a vision for systems of community

safety and care that centers wellness, healing, support, and transformation. This vision was manifested in our guiding agenda, The BREATHE Act. This agenda has inspired several pieces of legislation with the goal of community care and harm reduction at their core, including The [People's Response Act](#) (PRA).

This year, M4BL and M4BL Action Fund are launching the [People's Response Campaign](#) (PRC), a major initiative to further the vision of the BREATHE Act at the local, federal, and electoral levels! We've brought on 20 organizations from across the country committed to this vision as our PRC fellows, who will work together, grow together, and build Black political power at all levels to get us closer to a safer and freer future. A core component of their work this year will be **campaigning for resolutions in their cities for a non-police community-wellness first-response system.** Having people who are uniquely trained and qualified to respond in moments of trauma or mental-health struggles could mean drastically better care, support, and outcomes. It will also mean

fewer people in those moments of crisis will be killed by police when they need help. [Eighty-eight percent of Black Americans](#) support hiring mental-health professionals as non-police first responders to de-escalate mental-health crises. This is a common-sense action to improve community safety, and the people are behind it.

We're not just fighting for these changes locally; we're also taking it to Congress to fight for the [People's Response Act](#)! **The PRA emphasizes an inclusive, holistic, and health-centered approach to public safety by creating a public-safety agency within the Department of Human Health and Services** – because communities and experts agree that public safety is a matter of public health. The PRA would fund programs for non-carceral first responders, trauma-informed healing, restorative justice, survivor services, harm reduction-based treatment for mental health and substance abuse, and so much more. Our fellows are already organizing and lobbying to build support for the PRA both in Congress and with the people!

Tell your representatives to support the PRA now!

Lastly, our organizations will focus on activating voters for the 2024 elections! M4BL will be mobilizing voters through educational campaigns, town halls, and voter registration drives. me too. International is engaging in this election too!

They've introduced a non-partisan, survivor justice voter guide that provides a series of guiding questions to give voters better clarity on where candidates stand on issues that deeply impact those affected by sexual violence. In addition, along with other national partners, me too. will launch the Survivors Vote campaign which aims to codify survivors of sexual and gender based violence as an electoral constituency.

Major decisions are being made to take away our right to vote, to protest, and to make

decisions for our bodies, especially at the state and local levels. We're pushing for public questions and candidates that will enshrine our rights and further progress toward liberation while also fighting off the emboldened white-supremacist right wing.

The crisis of sexual violence is inextricably linked to political leaders ignoring proven community-safety solutions in favor of continued harm. We know better is possible when we address the causes and the harm instead of continuing the cycle. **Together, we will make real community safety a reality with the People's Response Campaign for ourselves and every survivor.**



SECTION SIX: RESOURCES

We are only as strong as our resources and support systems, so we encourage you to check out these resources and consider adding them to your safety practices.



Resources from me too. International:

me too. International believes in healing and action. We offer many free resources for survivors and advocates to pursue healing at their own pace and on their own terms.

Check out these me too. resources:

'me too.' Healing Resource Library:

Wherever you are on your healing journey, you are not alone. We have a team of researchers who have identified therapists, shelters, social services, crisis intervention, and much more. Explore our curated collection of resources and organizations dedicated to helping survivors by filtering your search by experience, need, and community support to find what's right for you.

'me too.' Toolkits:

These tools were created with survivors in mind and heart, from advocates, organizers, to wellness-circle facilitators, to journalists. Each toolkit focuses on topics that are critical to the healing process.

Survivor's Sanctuary:

Step into the sanctuary and heal on purpose. Survivor's Sanctuary offers 36 healing lessons to meet you in your healing journey. Healing lessons focus on the mind and body in 5-minute, 15-minute, and 25-minute increments. Whether you are just starting your healing journey or have been on the path for a while, there is a healing lesson for you. See you in the Sanctuary.

me too. Healing Room:

Explore our calming healing room for access to brief grounding practices. This space features guided meditations, healing playlists, journaling, and activities to explore. You can click on almost every object in the room and be transported to an activity, resource, or tool to support your healing. The Healing Room is available in Survivor's Sanctuary.

Check out these other toolkits from other community providers:

Survived and Healed:

Explore organizing resources, advocacy strategies, educational videos, research and policy info, workshop curricula, toolkits, and more. New S&P publications on the criminalization of trans & queer survivors, defending survivor self-defense, and advocacy for criminalized survivors are now available!

Sexualization Not Safety Toolkit:

This toolkit features Black girls, trans, and gender-nonconforming youths' experiences of police presence in schools. It was produced by In Our Names Network and Interrupting Criminalization.

Interrupting Intimate Partner Violence:

A guide for community responses to intimate partner violence without police involvement.

Accessing a Therapist

Like any relationship, a therapeutic relationship requires intention, attention, and cultivation. That's why finding the right therapist is the first step in building the foundation for a healthy therapeutic relationship.

- Here are some things to consider when looking for a therapist:
- Are you ready to heal? Are you ready to commit to the work of therapy?

- What is the therapist's race and gender? How much does that matter to you?
- What is the therapist's theoretical orientation? How do they approach therapy and healing?
- Does the therapist specialize in any treatment modalities or populations?
- Does the therapist take insurance and/or use a sliding scale?
- Is the therapist virtual, or can you meet in person? What is your preference?
- What would you like to feel in your therapeutic relationship? Do you want someone comforting and familiar, or might you prefer someone more distant and objective?
- Not all therapists do the same thing. Some can diagnose, and some cannot; some can offer medication management, and some cannot. What is your need? What is your preference?
- It's OK to ask questions, shop around, and break up if the relationship is not working.

Check out these therapy networks:

Open Path Collective:

This organization offers affordable, low-cost therapy from private-pay therapists. You can negotiate your price to as low as \$40 per session.

National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color:

This healing-justice network offers a directory of queer and trans therapists.

Therapy For Black Girls:

This is a national directory of Black femme therapists. You can search by your zip code.

The Breathe Network:

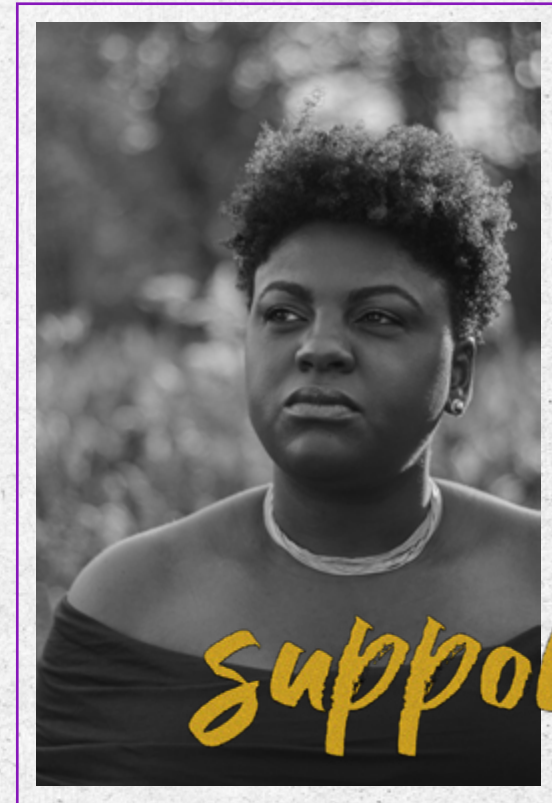
The Breathe Network supports sexual assault survivors with trauma-informed, sliding-scale healing resources and offers training and education for healers and advocacy organizations on best practices in trauma-informed care.

Psychology Today:

This is the largest national directory of therapists.

BEAM Network:

This organization offers several community mental-health resources, including a Black Virtual Therapist Network.



SECTION SEVEN:

COURAGE AND CULTURE: THE MIXTAPE

Closin' Out with some good vibes

The work of healing ourselves and each other, and dismantling harmful systems and fighting for better ones can feel heavy and overwhelming, we know. But remember, your joy is resistance, your joy is healing, your joy is radical, your joy is liberation! So take the time to find your joy; to celebrate yourself, how far you've come, and how far you know we'll all go together!

Here's a little celebration of courage and culture to get you started:

[Courage and Culture: The Mixtape](#)



With love,
Movement for Black Lives & me too.
International

 m4bl.org

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 metoomvmt.org

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 [@MeTooMVMT](https://www.facebook.com/MeTooMVMT)

 [@MeTooMVMT](https://twitter.com/MeTooMVMT)

THIS HAS BEEN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN
MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LIVES AND ME TOO. INTERNATIONAL

